

# rank & file



October 2023  
Volume 62, Issue 2

**Back Into the Swing  
of Things: golf team  
photo essay**

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# rank&file

volume 62 issue 2

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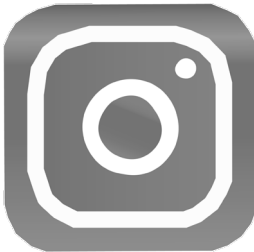
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## *Letter from the Editor*

The beginning of this school year flew by—it's hard to believe we're already two months in. Actually, this whole summer has been uncharacteristically eventful; from the Eras tour to Messi and Inter Miami, and from Barbenheimer to the Writers' Strike, there's a lot to go through.

Throughout the issue, you'll find a summer timeline to hear what the students have to say about these events.

For my fellow seniors navigating through college applications, my heart goes out to you. We're on our way to the end, even if it doesn't feel like it.

To my juniors and underclassmen going through a sudden ramp-up in course load, though it may not get easier, you will find better ways to manage.

To all Rank&File readers, I hope this issue's entertainment stories, like the Fall Food Review, provide a well-deserved break, while the features and opinion sections provide clarity on topics like Grading for Equity, affirmative action and the IB Diploma.

Melanie George  
Editor-in-Chief  
Rank&File

# Grading strategy “Grading for Equity” implemented

by rachel ackerman and sophie hauber

This year teachers are being taught about ‘Grading for Equity’, a grading system with hopes to align all grading policies and focus on students and their success.

Instructional Technology Coach, Rachel Baxter, leads the instruction of grading for equity along with Principal Litz. Baxter explained the goals of the new strategy.

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*“The goal is to be a little more streamlined and to make it clear for students and parents how they are earning grades in classes.”*

- Instructional Technology Coach Rachel Baxter

////////////////////  
 “What we’re trying to do is get the whole school to be a little more aligned with grading practices,” Baxter said. “There’s a lot of different ways that people are grading and assessing in the building and that adds to the mental load and stress of students.”

IB Anthropology and Honors Government teacher Olivia Tate described Grading for Equity as teachers giving all students the maximal opportunity to show their knowledge and do their

absolute best. Tate noted the hardships of implementing the strategy as a teacher.

“I think our school system does not allow for meaningful Grading for Equity,” Tate said. “We really have to change school culture for that to happen, but I think it’s positive. It’s putting the emphasis on what kids know versus behavior issues.”

Advanced Chemistry for IB Students and IB Chemistry HL teacher Jeremy Wade agreed with the positives to the Grading for Equity strategy.

“Grading for Equity has to be, and I think it is, a cornerstone here at Marshall,” Wade said. “For staff, it ensures best practices amongst teachers.”

Baxter noted the struggles associated with implementing the Grading for Equity strategy this year at Marshall.

“I think if you had asked me six months ago, I would have really different ideas about where I thought we would go,” Baxter said. “The goal is to be a little more streamlined and to make it clear for students and their parents how they are earning grades in classes.”

Tate suggested changes to grading strategies in order to improve Grading for Equity’s success at Marshall.

“You can get super radical here and you just dispel grades altogether. True standards based grading is proficient, not proficient, focusing on skills rather than grades A through F,” Tate said. “Moving to a 4.0 scale, that’s a four point



ART BY REBECCA PAZ AND RISHI VANKA

system that again focuses on rubrics that tell kids exactly where they are, versus giving them busy work.”

Tate explained how she tries to implement grading for equity into her grading policy.

“[What] I’m trying to do in this class is having meaningful formative assessments that are both easy for me to grade, but also put emphasis on their learning and not on a letter grade that they receive,” Tate said.

Wade also implements Grading for Equity into his style of grading and what he prioritizes.

“I do not include participation grades, it impacts students and would cause their grade to not necessarily be a reflection of what they know,” Wade said. “I ensure that all students have access to materials and different ways to display mastery of content.”

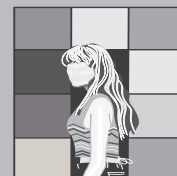
With increased interest in the Grading for Equity strategy, teachers will continue to implement it into their classrooms this year.

## March 17, 2023

Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour debuted on March 17, 2023, causing the “Wildest Dreams” of Swifties to come true over the three-and-a-half hour long spectacle.

“The experience went above and beyond my expectations,” sophomore Shehernaz Khan said. “I was expecting something fun, but it was nothing short of life changing.”

Swift continued to wow her audience by releasing “Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour” on October 12, 2023, a three-hour long film showcasing Swift’s last U.S. tour of the year, stunning the crowd at Los Angeles’s SoFi Stadium.



TAYLOR SWIFT  
 THE ERAS TOUR  
 ART BY REBECCA PAZ  
 ORIGINAL SOURCE: TAYLORSWIFT.COM  
 (ADAPTED VIA FAIR USE)

# Chromebook keyboard shortcuts

With the addition of the new Chromebooks, the school has released keyboard shortcuts to make learning easier. Here are the ones Rank&File chose as the most helpful.

Sign out: Press Ctrl, Shift, and q



Delete next letter: Press Launcher and Backspace



Take a screenshot: Press Ctrl and Show windows



Save current page as a bookmark: Press Ctrl and d



Print the current page: Press Ctrl and p



Turn Caps Lock on/off: Press Launcher and Alt



**May 10, 2023**

Beginning her world tour in Stockholm, Sweden on May 10, 2023, Beyoncé made a great return to the concerting world coming off of her "On The Run II Tour" with husband Jay-Z in 2018.

"Just seeing the crowd grooving and everyone in sync with their movements, I didn't feel like I was missing out," senior

Jordan Hymes said. "It was so amazing, the feeling of unity."

Not only was unity shown in the crowds, but also shown by inclusivity among the dancers, crew and even a guest appearance from her daughter Blue Ivy. Having concluded on October 1, 2023, the "Renaissance World Tour" was one for the books.

# Back Into the Swing of Things:

A golf photo essay

"This season was a lot of fun. We had a really great team this year, even if we didn't do so well [in terms of our win-loss record]. Three individuals qualified for regionals, which is really impressive."

- Senior Carter Stone



Seniors Dylan Shutello and Michael Stanford



Junior Owen McCarton

Senior Michael Stanford

"It was a great season. We had our largest turnout ever at tryouts and 18 players on the team this year. We finished 3-3-1 and seniors Harris Lechtman, Carter Stone, and Dylan Shutello advanced to regionals."

- Varsity Golf Coach John Windt



Freshman Isabella Zhou



Senior Harris Lechtman

● compiled by eleanor liang

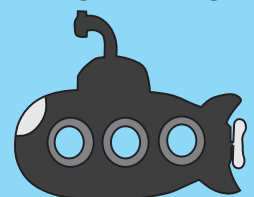
June 18, 2023

The OceanGate submarine, "The Titan", departed from St. John's, Newfoundland on June 18 to explore the Titanic shipwreck. Once communication was lost, people were left in anticipation of its discovery. On June 22 it was confirmed to have imploded after the discovery of debris from the Titan.

Junior Emily Kim said she was invested in the Titan's journey and was shocked by the

tragedy.

"It was unexpected and was sad to know what the explorers had to go through," she said. "I was always interested in the Titanic, and I feel like after hearing about the OceanGate event my interest expanded even more."



ART BY SOPHIE HAUBER

# Athletes of the Month: October

Chloe Kim, 12  
Field Hockey



CHLOE WANG/COLUMBIAN

Senior Chloe Kim was selected for All District 2nd team.

“For three seasons, I played defense and this year I started playing midfield which was a big change,” Kim said. “I had to adapt to getting lots of touches on the ball.”

Kim said she promotes positivity on the field.

“I try to be supportive both on and off the field,” Kim said. “I always want everyone to feel valued.”

Kim noted her goals for creating a positive environment on the team.

“I think we achieved that this year, we have a close knit team that supports each other,” Kim said.

● compiled by maddie bishop and nadine drachenko  
ART BY SOPHIE HAUBER AND JULINE SALAHI

*These athletes were hand-selected by the Rank&File staff for their outstanding performances this month.*

Carter Stone, 12  
Golf



COURTESY OF CARTER STONE

Senior Carter Stone was placed in the top 20 golf players in the region.

“I went from not even making the starting line up for playoffs at the end of the season, to being one of the top players on the team this year,” Stone said.

Stone acts as a role model for the younger players on the team,

encouraging them to one day reach one of the team’s six starting spots.

“I try to be a supportive teammate as I am one of the six seniors playing in a starting spot,” Stone said.



Is the Girls Volleyball Team Underrepresented? Teammate responds



Scan the QR code or visit [gcmnews.net](http://gcmnews.net) to read more!



MADDIE BISHOP/RANK&FILE

**June 28, 2023**

On June 28, Youtuber Colleen Ballinger released a song in response to rumors of her allegedly grooming children.

The song itself was poorly received, instantly gaining notoriety with lines such as “The only thing I’ve groomed is my two Persian cats.”

The song was meant to be an attack on cancel culture and the way that people on

the internet blindly believe any rumor they see, however the song’s success has been questioned.

“I didn’t even know who she was,” senior George Karaiskos said. “That was genuinely a terrible way to go about addressing allegations and she deserves all the criticism.”

# A New Era for Football: New coaching staff takes on the '23 season



● compiled by maddie bishop, nadine drachenko and georgia streett

The former head football coach was fired after four seasons. Flipping a page and starting a new chapter as head football coach, George Masten returns after leaving in 2017.

With a staff of eight new coaches, the program begins to rebuild its purpose after facing adversity.

Masten shares his past experience with the football program as he originally started here in 2009 as an assistant coach and took over as the head coach in 2014.

"When I first got here, the team was 0-26," Masten said. "With the coaching staff that I have now, we turned the program around and in a few years we won the conference."

The team went 9-1 in 2017, which was Masten's last season coaching.

"We made it to the playoffs for the first time in a very long time," Masten said. "Since 1997, I think it was the first or the second time it has been done."

Strength coach Ryan Wood started coaching at Marshall in 2014, when Masten officially became the head coach.

"Anyone compared to coach Masten is not a fair comparison," Wood said. "As far as I'm concerned, coach Masten is the best coach that a school could have."

Bosworth said.

It has become a major goal between the coaches this year to build relationships by verbally respecting their players.

"We respect the players as coach Masten and I are dads of old girls and these are our boys," Bosworth said. "We treat them how we would want our sons to be treated."

Senior team captain Derek Lenert said he notices greater effort from the new coaches and supports their visions for the program.

"The bond I have with these coaches is [one] I didn't really have in the past with any of the other coaches," Lenert said. "I've just been trying to get the underclassmen to really buy into what these coaches are doing here, because I know that if we all buy into the program, then we can be successful."

Lenert expresses appreciation for the joint effort and support from all of the coaches.

"I know all the players couldn't be more ecstatic about the new guys that they brought in," Lenert said. "I think it's something that we didn't know we needed until they showed up."

Ultimately, the coaches have



Wood said Masten has the best mixture of coaching techniques and is able to adjust accordingly.

"If more of a caring and empathetic coaching style is needed, then he's caring and empathetic. If more of a strong-willed, strict coaching style is needed, then that's what he's going to give," Wood said.

Masten is exercising the technique of giving other coaches more opportunities to make independent decisions.

"My number one thing is [that] I'm

environment on the field.

"Sometimes we watch a lot of old film and they look like they weren't excited about plays," Bosworth said. "I want to make sure that the guys are having fun."

Bosworth said he wants to steer away from a negative environment as he has had coaches in the past that were verbally loud and abusive to a certain extent.

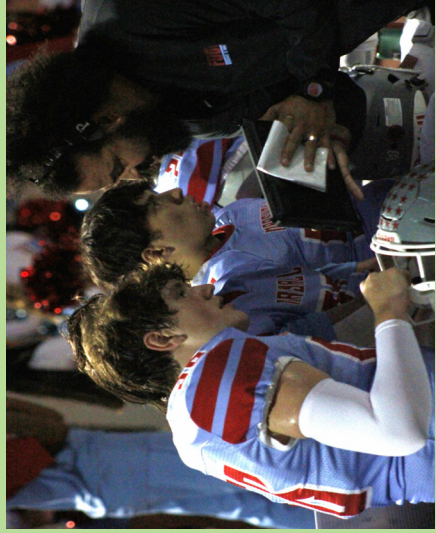
"As a coach, I learned that personally, as a player, I responded better to the coaches who weren't yelling strictly at me the whole time during practice,"

started to see unity, creating hope for future growth within the program.

"That's been the biggest goal this year, trying to get [the players] to go from being 'I's' and 'me' players, to 'us' and 'we,'" Masten said. "We have to be able to make a transition from that kind of selfish style of football to a team environment football."



JIM HALLING PHOTOGRAPHY/DL  
ACTION SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY



CHLOE WANG/COLUMBIAN



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# Cooking on and off the court

by **camila contreras and layla mohran**

After graduating from the Marshall Academy in 2011, Sean Appleby's love for teaching became a reality.

"I started coaching basketball because I just love the sport," Appleby said. "It's so much fun."

Appleby started coaching smaller groups during high school preparing him for working at Marshall.

"I've been coaching basketball since I was a sophomore in high school," Appleby said. "So this was the perfect opportunity for me."

Appleby's favorite part about teaching is seeing students grow in a hobby and talent as coach of the Girls Freshman Basketball team.

"There are girls that are still learning how to do a layup properly, but seeing that progression really means a lot to me," Appleby said.

Even when Appleby was the manager for the Girl's Varsity Basketball team when he was a student at Madison High School, Appleby said he enjoyed watching the growth first-hand.

Applebee said he sees growth in skill in his new job as head chef for the culinary classes.

"I had some students that couldn't hold a knife," Appleby said. "but now they're really good at it," The Marshall

culinary kitchen is unique to any kitchen Appleby has ever worked at. Appleby said he believes that the Marshall kitchen has everything you may need to know for the basics of culinary arts.

After spending his own high school experience in the Marshall Academy Appleby wants to continue to bring his students the joy he felt when he was a student here.

## Softball coaches building success

by **alexa lawrence and georgia streett**

With the new softball season, comes a new coach for the Varsity Softball team Head Coach Joe Mills.

Mills has been coaching a variety of sports for 23 years. Last year, he coached as a Varsity Softball assistant coach at Fairfax High School.

"I've been coaching travel softball for almost seven years now," Mills said. "We're a high level travel team."

Mills said his family history at Marshall encouraged him to coach here.

"My mom graduated from here, a bunch of cousins [and] other relatives graduated from here," Mills said.

Alongside Mills, Assistant Varsity Coach Amber Kluesener will be joining the team this year. Kluesener coached a travel softball team in Georgia and

currently coaches a Vienna Girls Softball team.

"I just really love [coaching] and it brings me joy," Kluesener said.

The new coaches hope to change the team's dynamic.

Mills said she hopes to "build a culture where it starts with each girl supporting one another."

While Mills encourages players to seek their teammates for support, Kluesener puts emphasis on the overall team atmosphere.

"I want to make sure that we provide a great positive environment for the girls," Kluesener said.

The coaches hope to have a lasting impact on the team and the scoreboard.

"It's not just a one-year thing," Mills said. "We want to build long-term success."

Since the team had a losing streak, another major goal for the coaches this year is to win. Kluesener's goal is to beat Madison.



ALEXA LAWRENCE/RANK&FILE

New softball coach Joe Mills pitches the ball for his players.

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**July 21, 2023**

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Lionel Messi made his Major League Soccer (MLS) debut playing for Inter Miami at an away game against the New York Red Bulls. Messi secured the team's 2-0 win by scoring the second goal of the game.

After winning the 2022 World Cup in Qatar for Argentina, Messi has shifted his focus to Inter Miami.

"As the game wrapped up, Messi felt welcomed and doesn't plan on leaving the team anytime soon." Junior Angel Nina said.

Messi's time with Inter Miami has come to an end for the 2023 MLS regular season. Though he was on international leave, he will continue playing for Inter Miami next season.

# "A lot is at stake in this election": Young Democrats Club takes a stand

by alexa lawrence and  
georgia street

With state and county office seats up for election in November, positions on the ballot include State Senate, House of Delegates, Sheriff and School Board members. This upcoming election President of the Young Democrats Club, junior Samad Quraishi notes the importance of these elections.

"The local elections are a pretty big deal as they determine who gets elected to make Virginia laws," Quraishi said, "which is often overlooked."

He believes that young voters are more likely to overlook local elections if it's not a presidential election year.

"Everyone who is 16 or above should get registered to vote, so when you're 18, you're all ready to go," Quraishi said. "Otherwise, it's complicated and a long process. A lot is at stake this election."

Honors Government and IB Anthropology teacher, Olivia Tate, reminds and encourages her students to register to vote.

"In my IB Anthropology

class, I tell them around primaries, 'Just register to vote, it's easy,'" Tate said.

Senior Ivanna Stefanova plans to vote in the upcoming local elections after being encouraged to do so in history classes by her teachers.

"They are always like, the right to vote is a privilege," Stefanova said. "We weren't able to vote a while ago and they're like, you should always exercise it."

During Learn last month, the Young Democrats Club helped students register to vote and offered donuts, buttons and stickers to those who attended.

"We also educated them about where to go and how the voting process works," Quraishi said. "We're making a dent in order to get people more educated and involved, but it takes time."

Tate believes political change takes time and consistently informed voting is important.

"It's not something that's going to happen quickly," Tate said. "It might take an election or two, but I firmly believe that voting does matter."

Tate emphasized the importance of the young voters,



ELEANOR LIANG/RANK&FILE

Junior Vedansh Garg, hands out voter registration forms at a registration drive hosted by the Young Democrats club.

and educating high school students about local politics. She believes voting is a good way for young people to let their representatives know where they stand on certain issues.

"I wish and I hope that with more young people voting, politicians will stand for something, rather than us voting between two options that we don't care about," Tate said.

Voting in the primaries determines the candidates for the general elections and local elections solidify the representation on the state level. Some of the positions

write and vote on state laws which directly affect students living in Virginia.

"You should still vote because otherwise, your local and state representation won't reflect what you want it to," Quraishi said.

More information on registration, necessary voting resources and candidate information can be found on The Virginia Department of Elections website.

The Virginia Department of Elections website has resources necessary for voting, voter registration, and candidate information. [vote.org](http://vote.org) also has more resources.

July 21, 2023

"I am become [Barbie], destroyer [of Barbie] worlds." The ironic pairing of "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" ended up making a name for itself after the movie's joint release date on July 21, 2023.

"Personally, 'Barbie' won," junior Chloe Wang said. "I think 'Oppenheimer' was a great movie but I don't think it was one of the best

movies I've watched because it was so long."

Being polar opposites, "Barbie" and "Oppenheimer" managed to balance each other out. With "Barbie's" lighthearted and playful plot, and "Oppenheimer's" complex telling of U.S. history, the movies created competition among their audiences on deciding which movie won in the world of film.

# AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

After years of legal battles, Harvard University and University of North Carolina lost their fight to keep affirmative action

## Here's what you need to know

On June 29, 2023, the US Supreme Court struck down a cornerstone for diversity in higher education institutions: affirmative action.

The program, challenged by the Students for Fair Action in a lawsuit against Harvard University and University of North Carolina, was found to be violating the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who supports the decision, said the decision "sees the universities' admissions policies for what they are: rudderless, race-based preferences designed to ensure a particular racial mix in their entering classes."

Students for Fair Action argued in a press release that affirmative action wrongfully used prejudices to reject or admit students based on their race.

"A university doesn't have real

diversity when it simply assembles students who look different but come from similar backgrounds and act, talk and think alike," the group said.

Harvard, in a public statement, wrote that while it will comply with the ruling, it will not be closing doors to any applicants.

"We continue to believe—deeply—that a thriving, diverse intellectual community is essential to academic excellence and critical to shaping the next generation of leaders."

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, in a dissent, disagreed with using the clause to overturn the ruling.

"With let-them-eat-cake obliviousness, today, the majority pulls the ripcord and announces 'colorblindness for all' by legal fiat," Jackson wrote in a dissent. "But deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life."

While race can no longer be a factor in admissions, the decision does not stop students from discussing how race has affected their lives.

"When a student references an experience overcoming discrimination, for example, any benefit must be tied to that student's courage and determination, not race alone," said Christina Pazzanese in an article from the Harvard Gazette.



ART BY GEORGIA STREETT

## Statesmen voices on the ruling

by **mona farah, zoe jones and rhea newnaha**

With the controversial decision to overturn affirmative action sweeping through the country, the debate is also echoing through our own school halls.

Teachers and students have commented on the ruling.

"It felt like we have taken not just one step back, but several steps back," said Black Student Union sponsor and

ESOL teacher Halimah Wells.

Economics and Personal Finance teacher Tola Atewologun said that he wasn't surprised by the Supreme Court's ruling to strike down Affirmative Action.

"This is an issue that has been contentious in America for years," Tola said. "It goes back and forth in several ways and given the makeup of the Supreme Court, this is kind of what most people expected."

Senior Keegan Rhyu said he found the court decision to

be in his favor.

"Because I'm Asian, I felt like affirmative action actually hurt my [admission] chances," Rhyu said.

He also said that while he understands the benefits of affirmative action, it could have been carried out more effectively.

"I understand that it's trying to promote diversity, but what ends up happening a lot of times is these really rich, or really affluent, minorities will get in and not the

people that are actually trying to get into college," Rhyu said.

Tola agreed.

"If you look at how affirmative action was applied in this country, it generally benefited not the descendants of slaves, but other black people from upper or upper middle income families," Tola said.

Counselor Mathew Tsoi said affirmative action admissions already carried bias with them.

"Every single human being has biases and so that's go

going to still come into factor just off of reading someone's name," Tsoi said.

Wells said affirmative action helped her receive her bachelors and masters degree from the University of Cincinnati.

"I think those doors would have been closed to me without affirmative action," Wells said.

Senior Emma Martin said her initial reaction to the Court ruling was one of concern.

"I'm scared [of] how that will affect me and how that will affect the diversity in colleges because there's already not a lot," Martin said.

However, Senior Ben Levy said that he thinks his application won't be impacted by the ruling.

"I don't think this ruling will mean much for me," Levy said. "As a white male student I think by and large in this

country it wouldn't be harder or easier to get in with or without affirmative action."

Wells said she hopes the ruling will not discourage students from pursuing a degree.

"I teach ESOL, and I want all of my students to have that opportunity if they want to pursue a higher education degree, where now I feel that many of them will probably feel like they can't and so they won't even try," Wells said.

She said the effects of the court decision will have an effect on people of color in the professional world.

"I feel that we will have less degreed people of color and therefore less people of color who are doctors, less people of color who are lawyers, less people of color who are CEOs," Wells said.

Tsoi said he thinks legacy admissions do not help this court ruling.

"I think legacy is kind of dumb," Tsoi said. "Just because your parents went to a school should not make you more qualified than another student."

Martin agreed.

"I don't believe legacy specifically shows or proves that you're able to go to college," Martin said.

Tsoi said that everyone is not starting the race to financial freedom at the same spot, and it is important to recognize that.

Tola said with the removal of affirmative action in educational institutions, legacy admissions are likely to follow suit.

"My guess is that they are on their way out, and many schools have already eliminated them," Tola said. "We need to really start looking at what a fair admissions system looks like."

Levy said fair admission

practices cannot exist without fair education. He said at Marshall, students have access to resources that some communities do not have access to, like certain higher level classes.

"We [also] have excellent support systems from our counselors to our school psychologist and faculty that others across the country cannot afford," Levy said.

Tola said that while affirmative action may not be needed, a diverse education is the best one.

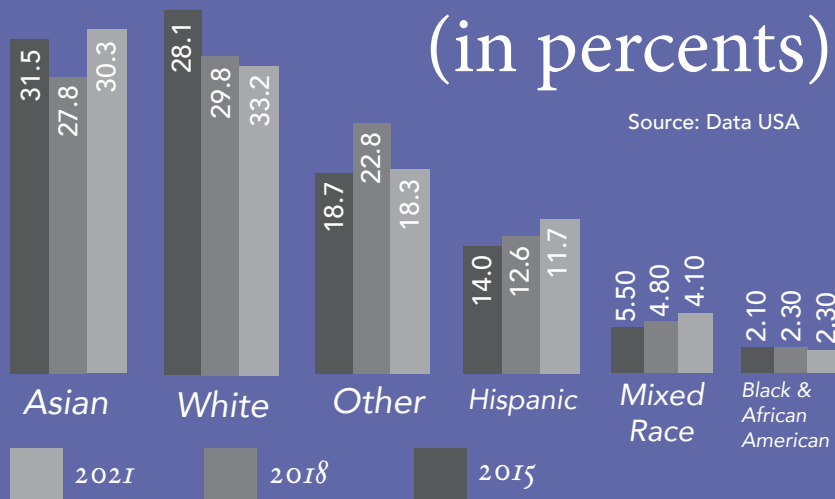
"People have found a way to further their education to become successful and whatever dream career they've wanted," Wells said. "So even though this is a knock against post-secondary education, it doesn't mean it's the end."

## A look at the numbers

In an interview with NPR, Melissa Murray, the acting dean of Berkley when affirmative action was lifted in California in 2016, said she noticed a drop in minorities both admitted and applying.

"There was an immediate drop off in the number of African American students that was both a confluence of the change in the admissions policy, but also African American students not wanting to go [to Berkeley] under those conditions," Murray said.

## Racial Demographics at University of California at Berkeley (in percents)



spread compiled by mona farah, zoe jones and rhea newnaha

# Diverse educations are ideal educations

Over the summer, the Supreme Court overturned a major cornerstone of diversity in higher education institutions. When discussing collegiate affirmative action in college, it feels as though the main responses for it are either for or against the decision, but we want to offer a perspective in between.

We believe in diverse and equitable opportunities. Diversity is a system that works to expand the knowledge of everyone involved. However, was collegiate affirmative action creating true diversity?

According to The New York Times, the median family income of a student at Harvard University in 2014 when affirmative action was in place was \$168,800. 67% of Harvard's students were in the top 20% of the income bracket. Conversely, only 1.8% of students are in the bottom 20%.

Looking at the University of North Carolina for the same year, the statistics are strikingly similar. At UNC, 60% of students are also in the top 20% of the income bracket. These figures show a majority of these students share the same socio-economic backgrounds, and will most likely have similar experiences. In this sense, these institutions

lacked the diversity that affirmative action sought to create.

However, we understand affirmative action profits the business side of colleges, both figuratively and literally. These higher level institutions, despite having the goal of education, are businesses first. It makes sense that colleges prioritize legacy applicants because they are more likely to go to the university and their families are more likely to donate. However, solely because your family has a history with attending a university does not automatically qualify you to also attend. This example also creates the same problem as above: colleges are not creating a truly diverse community.

While sports recruitment is a valuable option for students from low-income families seeking to pursue higher education, college athletics has been dominated by white students. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association in 2012, 70% of college athletes across all divisions were white, and those numbers have only slightly decreased to 62% in 2022. The numbers here show this form of affirmative action can also move us further from diversity.

These students don't always reach the academic standards that the university is known for according to a study from the Princeton University Press stating college athletes overall had lower SAT scores than non-athletes. However, they bring other significant factors that help the university succeed in different ways. While they help bring success and spirit to a campus, this form of affirmative action still does not comply with diversity on a larger scale. Perhaps this should be a separate admissions process altogether.

Collegiate affirmative action carries much controversy. As a tool for enhancing diversity, collegiate affirmative action can fall short. However, it can work. Collegiate affirmative action has no doubt increased the admission chances of minorities and increased their confidence in the application process. However, zooming out on the make-up of these institutions reveals its flaws. While collegiate affirmative action is gone for good, we must now turn to what fair admissions looks like to fill the gap affirmative action has left behind and rebuild hope in our education system.

## What the decision means for you

Although the ban on affirmative action has left many applicants unsure of the college admissions process, there are ways that students can navigate through this challenge.

"If students feel like they have information they want to get across that has to do with their race or ethnicity, they'll talk about it in different ways," Humphreys said. "They'll just have to do it in more of a thoughtful and deliberate way."

Humphreys said this is the biggest way to do this is through personal essays.

He also said that when making decisions on who to admit, colleges and universities consider how well an applicant would fit in their school.

"Colleges are making admissions decisions holistically, kind of, like on everything you have to offer," he said.

However, Humphreys added that race is not something everyone has to discuss.

"If you want to talk about it, first you have to decide, is it something about yourself that you want [colleges] to know?" He said.

Humphreys also said that students should ask themselves how they could contribute to the school by mentioning their background.

"When they're considering your racial identity or your background, they're kind of considering how will you get involved in campus?" he said. "What about your own identity is really going to affect

other people or improve the community on campus or improve the learning?"



ART BY ALEXA LAWRENCE

● spread compiled by mona farah, zoe jones and rhea newnaha

# To IB...

"I heard even if you pick a topic you enjoy, [the Extended Essay] going to suck because it's so long."

"They didn't have as many STEM courses as I wanted."

"It was too much busywork for us."

"The super long essay IB people have to write actually sounds miserable."

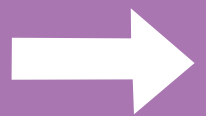
"When I do have to write, I have no issue at all. IB has prepared me for it."

I think it's the best college prep curriculum that we have in the country."

"I've heard from a friend that the IB diploma was harder than Harvard Law School."

"I definitely took a lot of IBs that made my life stressful in high school."

# or not to IB



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# “As a STEM student, IB is just kind of irrelevant.”

by zoe jones and rishi vanka

---

University of Virginia freshman Aitana Wells was one of many Marshall students who earned the rigorous IB Diploma last year. However, she says that in spite of the work she put in, she didn't feel prepared enough for her STEM classes in college.

“STEM as a whole, the content they gave was good, but it was too much for the time we had,” Wells said. “It was too much busywork for us to understand the fundamental concepts.”

Wells said that her high school experience, while rigorous, did not align with her current college experience.

“If I think about my past schedule for the past few years, it was insane,” Wells said. “I went to school, I went to practice and I went to bed. Now, my classes are harder, but somehow the workload is just easier. I think that they give the right amount of work for how hard the class is.”

Virginia Tech freshman Rishita Jain said that there were few IB STEM courses available for her schedule.

“I felt as though at least Marshall in terms of IB, they didn't have as many STEM courses as I wanted,” Jain said.

In addition to a lack of classes, Jain said that getting credits transferred was harder because she didn't do the IB Diploma, despite having taken many IB courses.

“Even though I should technically be out of these intro level courses,” she said, “I have to retake them.”

Jain said that the IB Program didn't prepare her enough for college because of how it differs from AP, the more common college-level program in the US.

“AP teaches you a little bit more to think strategically whereas IB teaches you to think a little bit more creatively,” she said. “But when it comes to STEM fields, you're trying to think more strategically.”

////////////////////////////////////  
*“I strongly believe that it didn't only prepare me in terms of the content that I was learning in college, but even more so the skills that I needed to thrive in college.”*

- 2018 IB Diploma recipient Pamela Paz

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However, Jain said that despite the drawbacks, taking IB classes prepared her through their rigor.

“In college,” she said, “it feels like you have significantly less work because you've been trained to work so much through all those courses.”

Syracuse University sophomore and sports analytics major Theo

Schmidt said that doing the IB Diploma helped him develop his writing skills.

“When I do have to write,” he said, “I have no issue at all. IB has prepared me for it.”

Schmidt said that doing the IB Diploma was a positive experience despite its rigor and difficulty transferring credits to college courses.

“I didn't choose whether I went to an IB school or AP school,” he said. “I didn't choose whether my college was going to accept my credit or not, but at the end of the day, I think it helped me get into where I want to be.”

UNC Chapel Hill graduate and Biology major Pamela Paz said that her IB courses helped her even outside of the classroom.

“I strongly believe that it didn't only prepare me in terms of the content that I was learning in college,” she said, “but even more so the skills that I needed to thrive in college.”

Paz said that doing the IB Diploma prepared her for her life after college through the study habits she formed.

“From personal experience,” she said, “making sure I'm getting ahead and starting to study from the very beginning of the unit. I am starting a project as soon as it's assigned. I am taking a lot of steps in my Extended Essay before it's really due. All of that helps so that it never got to a point of too much overwhelm where I didn't

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**July 28, 2023** 

Travis Scott released his album, “Utopia,” on July 28th, 2023, five years after his last album.

The hype around the album leading up to its release spread across the media, leaving fans excited in anticipation of its release.

With over a billion streams after three months, “Utopia” has been a big hit.

“‘Utopia’ was very different from the

Travis Scott I was used to, but I really enjoyed it,” senior Mehdi Abbassi said. “I give it a big yes.”

With 19 different feature artists, including Drake, 21 Savage, Kid Cudi and others, the album has many different song vibes to listen to whether from the moshpit or from your bed.

**For more, see page 22.**



want to do it anymore.”

Paz said she credits IB Theory of Knowledge, a required course for IB Diploma candidates, for helping her develop critical thinking skills.

“Being able to be a critical thinker and think outside the box,” she said, “that’s a skill that I’m able to apply in my personal and academic life on a day-to-day basis. I believe that TOK made me very open-minded as well, which I think is a very important skill, especially in the field that I find myself in currently, which is healthcare.”

Paz said that the Diploma program was invaluable and recommends that underclassmen be open to taking it.

“It was the abilities I learned throughout my IB career that allowed me to be successful no matter what course I took in college and even beyond,” she said.

William and Mary freshman and prospective psychology and economics major Sienna Bowater said that while valuable, the drawbacks of doing IB shouldn’t be ignored.

“I definitely took a lot of IBs that

made my life stressful in high school,” she said.

Additionally, Bowater said that the Diploma’s course requirements make course selections a rigid process.

“[IB has] some options but a lot of the time those are electives that are more focused towards something I’d want to pursue,” Bowater said.

Loyola Marymount University freshman and Film Studies major Francis Abradu-Otoo agreed with Bowater about the rigor of IB courses.

“I feel like IB classes are honestly a little bit harder than college classes,” he said.

Despite this, Abradu-Otoo said that although IB courses were more challenging than his current ones, they prepared him well for college by improving his study habits.

“The studying regime that I developed in IB has helped me become more independent in college,” he said.

Abradu-Otoo said that when selecting courses, people should know themselves and what they’re interested in.

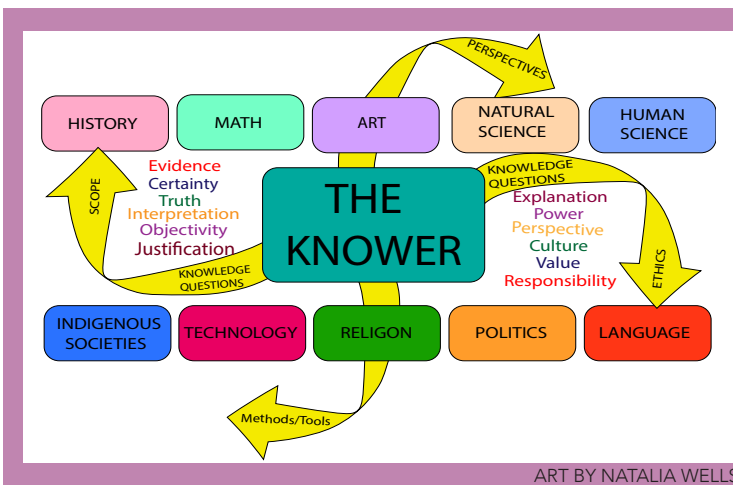
“You should always be open to taking new courses and things like that,” he said, “but you shouldn’t force yourself to take a class just because it’s IB.”

Abradu-Otoo said he recommended students to take challenging courses, but maintain a healthy work-life balance.

“You should try and challenge yourself a little bit in high school. You shouldn’t have a completely breezy junior or senior year, but you shouldn’t overburden yourself. You should know your limits, but I highly recommend taking IB courses. I think they’re really good for college prep. They honestly make college, if not easy, just a lot more manageable.”

Abradu-Otoo said that although he chose not to do the full Diploma program, students who haven’t fully decided should still try it out.

“There’s really no penalty if you realize that the workload is a lot for you and you want to kind of scale back to just doing IB classes instead of doing the full diploma, like I did,” he said.



“I’m confused just sitting in TOK. I can look at that poster, and it doesn’t help me understand how interconnected the topics are, which I’m imagining is the purpose of drawing a giant squid with arrows pointing at everything.”

—Senior and IB Diploma candidate AJ Cotto-Rivera

July 31, 2023

“Euphoria” actor Angus Cloud was declared dead on July 31. CNN revealed Cloud’s cause of death to be an accidental overdose.

“It’s heart-breaking to hear that the death of one of its key actors was due to an accidental overdose,” senior Riya Bajpaj said. “Angus Cloud was one of my favorite actors on the show, and it definitely won’t be the same without him.”

Read more on [gcmnews.net](http://gcmnews.net) or scan the QR code on the right.



# AP versus IB: What's the Difference?

by rachel ackerman and rebecca paz

The IB Diploma Program is one of the many factors that makes our school unique.

We are one of eight Fairfax County public high schools that provide the International Baccalaureate Diploma program as opposed to the 16 that have Advanced Placement instead.

Junior Rachel Neuman experienced taking both AP and IB classes and said she immediately noticed the difference when she switched schools.

"I think switching to IB has been a good decision for me, but there are definitely some differences, and I feel that other students may be a bit more prepared than I am," she said.

She said she observed differences in her IB Physics and IB Analysis and Interpretations classes when graphing.

"IB definitely has more style to it, and though it still gives you an

advanced college-level curriculum, it tends to integrate a lot of skills that aren't necessarily included in the standard college classes that AP models after," Neuman said.

These differences beg the question for many students of whether IB gets as much recognition from universities during the admissions process.

College & Career Specialist Gardner Humphreys said that colleges may prefer the IB program in some cases.

"I hear more colleges say that the skills that you learn from the IB program are more of what they want you to have as you go into college," he said.

Humphreys said he feels strongly about the importance of the IB program and the benefits that come with it.

"I think it's the best college prep curriculum that we have in the country," he said, "It is just as good for being accepted into a competitive college as AP."

Though Humphreys recognizes the benefits of IB in the college experience, he said that it has some deterring aspects.

He said the factor that most discourages students from pursuing the IB diploma is the increased emphasis on analysis rather than memorization.

Neuman said she noticed this distinction through her AP and IB history classes.

"For my thesis statements in AP World History last year, the emphasis was more on the evidence that backed up my claim," Neuman said. "In IB, they seem to still want good evidence for thesis statements, but there seems to be more emphasis on having a well-rounded argument."

Overall, multiple factors influence both AP and IB courses. From college credit to college readiness the differences between the two make the programs unique.

July 14, 2023

With Prime Video's release of "The Summer I Turned Pretty" season two on July 1, TSITP fan and sophomore Grace Morgan said it was big on social media.

"I had heard of [TSITP] from my friends when season one came out, and they thought it was good," she said.

With season three confirmed, Morgan

shared her thoughts on season two.

"I didn't love the ending, but I liked seeing how the group came together to save their beach house. It was more serious than the first season, which was different. But I liked seeing the characters have fun together, and it still had the same overall fun summer mood as the first season," she said.

## Table Talk: Staying Focused with Abeer El-Baz

Rank&File talked to math teacher and IB coordinator Abeer El-Baz about her best tips for staying productive and focused this school year



JULINE SALAHI/RANK&FILE

### How do you get over the stress from a busy schedule?

I always share this quote with my students, “Worrying is like having a rocking chair: it will keep you busy but will get you nowhere.” Having a plan and allocating time for everything will help you focus on the task that you’re doing, even entertainment. This way, you’re not also trying to get entertainment out of place and waste your time. [Make] sub plans within the big plans, and also know when to ask for help. If I’m stuck, I’m gonna waste time, and I’ll be distracted.

### What can you say to students who make the plan but don’t follow through?

Reflection is so important because if [you] sit every night and say, “Okay, so what worked for me, and what didn’t work for me?” and untangle the factors, you can see what could have contributed to this fact that you couldn’t carry out the plan. Sometimes it’s small tweaks that we need to do. For example, instead of watching TV first, and then studying, maybe the other way around. We’re all different in the way we approach our work, but that’s why you have to sit down and see what contributed to this and deal with these factors.

### How can students move on from past mistakes when trying to be productive?

Obviously in high school, this is a time for students to learn about themselves, their abilities, their limitations and their strength, and how to organize their time. The more you’re into it, the more time that you’re not wasting—you’re knowing yourself earlier, so that you can work smart, not hard.

● compiled by melanie george

## Opinion: IB Stressed

by simon barnes

FCPS needs to put more resources into supporting student mental health, especially those at the IB level.

It’s been known for years that the IB system is extremely detrimental to students’ mental health. A study done in 2015 revealed that 12% of IB students have experienced anxiety attacks or panic attacks weekly (Feld & Shusterman). IB students take six college-level classes and others outside of school, leaving little time for personal wellbeing. The IB model is not sustainable for students—they should not sacrifice their physical and mental health to this degree.

Based on a study on 232 IB students, 50% reported feeling stressed daily and 23% feeling very stressed. 82% of those sampled cited grades as the main driver of their stress, and 35% named social factors (medium.com). Clearly, the pursuit of the IB Diploma causes students immense stress over their grades and social lives. Something needs to change.

Constant stress has other side effects too, over half of those sampled reported being unable to think clearly due to stress, while others

reported difficulty making decisions. Sustained stress is unhealthy and clearly detrimental to students.

While there have been some attempts to incorporate mental health aid in schools, it’s not working. One major example is Advisory, a relatively new portion of the school week meant to help students destress. However, Advisory fails at this and you’ll be hard-pressed to find a student who feels differently.

Advisory takes away time that students could spend getting work done and being with friends, two things that would be beneficial to mental health. Instead, students are made to play games and sit through lessons meant for children. Advisory demeans students and wastes their time, adding to their stress while it claims to do the opposite.

If FCPS truly cares about their students, they will put real measures into place to protect their students’ mental health. IB students are kids too, and they deserve the time to be kids the same as non-IB kids. Mental health issues don’t just affect those in the IB diploma, they hurt people from all walks for life.

———— **August 20, 2023** ———— →

Spain won the Women’s World Cup, and Luis Rubiales allegedly sexually assaulted player Jenni Hermoso on August 20, 2023.

“I think what’s really annoying is that this situation ended up

being bigger news than the Spanish women winning, which it really should have just been a moment for them to celebrate this amazing accomplishment,” senior Ainsley McCoy said.

# Flavors of Fall

*a taste of our area's autumnal menus*

by mona farah, maha jiwani and eleanor liang



STARBUCKS  
ICED APPLE CRISP  
OATMILK SHAKEN  
ESPRESSO  
3/10

## Starbucks by eleanor liang

This year happens to be the 20th birthday of Starbucks' Pumpkin Spice Latte, the iconic drink we all know and love. Maha, Mona and I tried two of the coffee chain's new seasonal drinks—one inspired by the classic PSL and one not—to see if they might become our new fall time favorites.

I'll never say no to an iced chai, and though I wouldn't deem myself pumpkin spice's biggest fan, I was looking forward to the **Iced Pumpkin Cream Chai Tea Latte**. This drink contains a blend of black tea infused with spices and milk, topped with a sweet pumpkin cream cold foam and a dusting of pumpkin spice. I really liked this drink—it was perfectly balanced in terms of sugar and spice. As I mentioned earlier, I'm not a pumpkin spice fanatic, and though

I appreciate the autumnal ambience it's associated with, you won't catch me ordering a Pumpkin Spice Latte every morning.

That's why I enjoyed this drink. Underneath the cold foam, the drink is essentially a normal chai latte; the pumpkin cold foam just adds the perfect level of fall flavor that complements the existing cinnamon, spiced flavor of the chai. Mona and Maha also liked this drink, and we rate it a **9/10**.

The Starbucks **Iced Apple Crisp Oatmilk Shaken Espresso** is advertised as their signature Blonde Espresso combined with hints of apple, cinnamon and brown sugar—all shaken together and topped off with oat milk. My hopes were high for this drink, and I appreciated that Starbucks released a fall drink that wasn't just the usual pumpkin spice spin-off. But unfortunately, this drink's promise of spiced apple flavors let me down. This drink had me searching for the slightest hint of apple like Mr. Litz hunting down students during the tardy sweep. In the end, I didn't taste anything remotely apple. There was a tiny aftertaste of cinnamon, but other than that, this drink was basically a normal shaken espresso. For this, we give it a rating of **3/10**.



STARBUCKS  
ICED PUMPKIN CREAM  
CHAI TEA LATTE  
9/10



DUNKIN'  
PUMPKIN  
MUFFIN  
5/10

## Chick-fil-A by maha jiwani

Chick-fil-A introduced two new items to their fall menu—seemingly avoiding the pumpkin flavor trend—the “swicy” Pepper Pimento Sandwich and the Caramel Crumble Milkshake.

The **Honey Pepper Pimento Chicken Sandwich** is a new sweet and spicy variation of their Original Chicken Sandwich. I’m a huge fan of the OG chicken sandwich, so I was excited to see if this would be my new go-to Chick-fil-A order. Best served warm, this sandwich oozes sweet honey and tangy pimento cheese. If you enjoy an extra kick to your food like I do, you might need to bring along your own choice of spice, since the honey masked most of the heat from the jalapeños. As mentioned before, I highly recommend that you eat the sandwich warm, otherwise, the cheese becomes clumpy and hard – similar to the cafeteria’s nacho cheese. Overall, this sandwich had a great mix of sweet and spicy

## Dunkin’ by mona farah

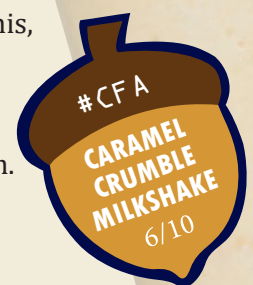
Dunkin’s fall menu returns with their Pumpkin Cake Donut and Pumpkin Muffin, two delectable treats to accompany with their signature coffees: a perfect pair for our favorite season.

First, we started off with **Dunkin’s Pumpkin Cake Donut**. I was eager to try this dark-orange dessert doused in a royal icing glaze. The soft, chewy texture of the donut made it easy to bite into, and its sweet, spiced flavor was one of the first things I noticed. I was definitely able to taste the pumpkin’s rich flavor, along with hints of cinnamon and other seasonal spices. Despite the donut’s delicious fall flavors, it was a little stale and dry. Even though the fall flavors in this delectable treat were strong and prominent, I couldn’t understand the ‘cake’ aspect of the donut as there was nothing in its texture that was remotely cake-like. Eleanor, Maha, and I all decided to rate this second Dunkin’ classic a **7/10**.

Although it wouldn’t be my regular order, I definitely think it’s worth giving it a try. Eleanor, Mona and I rate it a **8/10**.

Since I have a massive sweet tooth, I couldn’t wait to try the new **Caramel Crumble Milkshake**. Chick-fil-A’s milkshakes have always been a personal favorite, so I was very happy my flavor options were expanding. The drink consists of a caramel butterscotch flavor, vanilla ice cream and—my favorite part—bits of blondie crumbles. The first sip tasted genuinely perfect. You get through the whipped cream topped with a cherry—Chick-fil-A’s classic milkshake toppings—and get a mouth full of a sweet caramel flavor with the blondie’s crunch for a fun texture. Once you take one sip though, you should stop there. After that, the drink tastes like straight sugar. You might need a jug of water to clear the sugar piling in your throat, but it is definitely a great dessert drink to try. Eleanor, Mona and I rate it a **6/10**.

Then, it was time to try the next classic on Dunkin’s fall menu: the **Pumpkin Muffin**. The surface of this pumpkin-filled treat was drizzled in vanilla icing, which made it look very appetizing. However, after trying it, I was disappointed to find that it wasn’t as delicious as it looked. In addition to the lack of flavor, the muffin was also extremely messy. It almost crumbled apart after taking my first couple of bites. The vanilla icing also didn’t help to cover up the dry and cornbread-like texture of the muffin. I love a good dessert topped with frosting, but unfortunately for this dessert, I could barely taste it. The muffin overall was pretty stale, and wasn’t even that sweet to me. It hardly even tasted like pumpkin at all, thanks to its cornbread-like flavor. Because of this, we decided to give this supposed “Dunkin’ classic” a **5/10**. The dessert itself was a bit of a disappointment, and we think you’re better off “Dunkin’” this one in the trash.



Art by Eleanor Liang  
Original Sources: chick-fil-a.com,  
dunkindonuts.com and starbucks.com  
(Adapted via Fair Use)

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# UTOPIA

Rank&File discusses our top three songs on Travis Scott's 'Utopia,' which came out on July 28, 2023

## TELEKINESIS

"TELEKINESIS" by Travis Scott featuring SZA and Future has been a hit, sitting at the third most listened song on Utopia with over 100M streams.

"My favorite song on the album is TELEKINESIS," sophomore Elisha Williams said, "because every artist on the song sounded the best, especially SZA's part, when you blast it and sing it in the car with your friends."

Like SZA said in this song, you just really can't get enough.

## FE!N

"FE!N," featuring Playboy Carti, is the most streamed song on Utopia. It is the best hype song on the album.

"I like it because it's a song that can get your energy up, and it is a good song to rage to," senior Neil Anis said.

When Travis Scott performed "FE!N" live in Italy at a concert, it was reported to have caused a 1.3 magnitude earthquake due to the hype of the crowd.

## CIRCUS MAXIMUS

"CIRCUS MAXIMUS" features R&B Artists Swae Lee and The Weeknd.

"CIRCUS MAXIMUS" is also the name of the film directed by Travis Scott that led to his album release.

The film was shown in 170 exclusive theaters, three hours before the album dropped. It was cultivated of mind bending and abstract visuals from across the world. It is now available on YouTube.

• compiled by layla mohran and ben pyatt

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**September 27, 2023** 

The Writer's Guild of America strike started on May 2 and came to an end on September 27 after 148 days of protest.

"I'm really happy that stuff is coming back, and it sucks because there was a moment when 'Barbenheimer' was happening, and people were going to the movies again, [and] that hasn't happened since before

Covid-19. It's really sad that these strikes were happening in that time period because it kind of took away from the meteoric rise that could have happened, but it's also better because that all that tension that was on media at that time period, it definitely helped with the strikers," senior Lakshmi Shastry said.

# Setting Up for Failure: Preliminary English courses do not prepare for the IB path

by maddie bishop and ben pyatt

The freshman and sophomore year English curriculum doesn't prepare students pursuing the IB HL Literature courses. The workload, expectations of writing level, and literature becomes significantly more difficult between the jump from sophomore to junior year.

The expectations of reading and writing level from the first half of Marshall's English curriculum are not nearly high enough to lay the groundwork for the workload of their final years in English. Skills such as picking out style choices are useful things to know for HL Literature, but aren't emphasized in the lower level classes due to the curriculum. The rubrics used in IB have a higher level of expectations than just the general education and honors English classes offered to underclassmen.

At the end of sophomore year, the English classes have a film unit, where students watch movies for a few weeks. The students take notes on

the camera angles, visuals and characterization displayed in the films. At the end of note taking, there was the option to use the film in a presentation that compared two works we studied in that class over the course of the year. This unit lacks value and doesn't correlate to any of the units in HL Literature.

On top of having to analyze texts with higher density, the change in workload from year to year is drastic, which poses a challenge for many students as they have to budget their time more efficiently. Classroom discussions dive deeper into content than before and force students to have an advanced understanding of the dense literature with little allotted time to read for homework. Most of the books read beforehand are middle school level or graphic novels. The novel "Scythe," read in English 9 Honors, is recommended for children 12 and up which proves the curriculum lacks a high level of reading. The written work is very simple and not very thought-provoking. Fast forward to IB English HL,

students read high level literature every night while analyzing subtle details within the text. The change from year to year may not have a large effect on some, however it doesn't level the playing field. Implementing a harder curriculum earlier on and conditioning the students to a high workload with dense reading material will better prepare them for their four years of English.

In English 10 Honors students also studied graphic novels such as "American Born Chinese." Graphic novels don't teach students the same skills to draw deeper meanings from authors such as Chekov and Shelley that are studied at the HL level. The cultural symbols of "American Born Chinese" are meaningful, but it is laid out directly for the reader to see amongst the comic strips. In the book "Frankenstein," there aren't visuals that direct readers to symbols and motifs in the same way, so helping students gain greater comprehension of these texts will allow them to develop more structured comments in

classroom discussions.

Out of all the units from English 10 Honors, the "Homegoing" unit proved to be most useful as the novel has deeper meaning and themes to pick out. In HL Literature, students have studied global issues within texts and done a presentation analyzing author's style choices. As "Homegoing" was more of a challenging read compared to the other texts we studied earlier on, it failed to prepare us for the multiple books and texts we look at each quarter in HL Literature and still isn't comparable to books written in the early 19th century which use more sophisticated language.

The rolling gradebook specifically allows for improvement in HL Lit, but it would have been less stressful to have past experience using the critical and creative thinking skills necessary to excel. The rigor of IB courses is known to prepare students for college, but the foundation for these courses established by freshman and sophomore year English is lacking.

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